

SERMONS
Preached at the Meeting of the
COUNCIL
OF
George Heriot's
HOSPITAL
At
EDINBURGH

Printed by George Moorman, Edinburgh.



TO THE READER.

Among the Sermons lately Preached, at the Meeting of the Governours of George Heriot's Hospital, Some who heard them thought fit to publish the two following, Hoping they may be useful to excite people to Works of Charity especially such good Works, the Fruit of which is extended to many, and more particularly such as tend to promote the Education of Young Persons, who have none to care for them, and who may be afterwards useful, whether by publick or more private service to the Church or Nation: It hath been observed of late Years,

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since

since this course of Preaching on such subjects began, more such Charity hath been given in this City then in many Years before, And that Fond designed for Erecting a Hospital for Maintenance and Education of Orphans of the Female Sex hath much encreased, to which many Pious Persons both Men and Women have contributed Liberally, beside other pious Mortifications and Donations made in the City for other publick Uses. The hope, that these and other Sermons of the like Tendency may (by Gods Blessing) have further influence on well disposed Christians to whom God hath given Wealth, that they may also have a Heart to use it, for his Glory, and to serve the Lord with their substance, and that people may be perswaded thus to shew their Faith by their Works, Is that which moved the Publisbers to send these two Sermons Abroad.

A
S E R M O N

Preached by

Mr. GILBERT RULE Minister of the
Gospel, and Principal of the Colledge of
Edinburgh.

Munday, December 3d. 1694.

Pfal. 112. ver. 9.

He hath dispersed, He hath given to the Poor, His Righteousness endureth for ever, His Horn shall be exalted with Honour.

THIS Psalm Informeth us of the Great Blessings that attend the Godly; As the Apostle also telleth us, that *it hath the Promises of this Life, and that which is to come*: And that it is *profitable for all Things*. 1 Tim. 4. 8. And the Psalmist doth also give us some of the Characters of the Man that shall be thus Blessed, that he is one that *fears the Lord* ver. 1. Awful Thoughts of the Holiness, Goodness, Power and Majesty of God do Influence him in the Course of his Life, Also *He delighteth in God's Commandments* ver. 1. his Will and Affections are gained to the practice of Holiness.

It is not barely the Terrours of a Natural Conscience that trouble him; He is called an *Upright Man*, ver. 4. an *Unbyassed Man*, who singly mindeth Duty and the Glory of God. Likewise he is called a *Good Man*, ver. 5: a Benign Person, and of a Loving and Lovely Disposition. He is also *Righteous* ver. 6 Inclined to do Justice to all, and give every one their due. But the Commendation of this Happy Man, that the Psalmist doth here most insist on, Is his *Charity*, his Affection and Regard to the Necessities of Men; which maketh him bestow liberally for their Relief, so far as he is able ver. 4. 5. and in the Text.

In the words read we have two Things to be considered. 1. The practice of the Good Man. 2. The Blessings that follow on this practice, The practice or Duty is set forth in two Expressions 1. *he hath dispersed*. The Chaldee Paraphrase hath it, He hath Dispersed his Money or Goods מְפִיץ for that is indeed meant, his work is not to scrape and hoord, and to keep, as they who set their Heart on the World, but as he is duely careful to get by good Means, and to beware of wicked Lavishing; so his great care is, how to lay out for the Glory of God, and the good of Mankind; This word importeth, 1. The Good Mans communicating of his Goods, neither laying them up, nor bestowing all on himself, his Pride, Vanity, or other Lusts; he believes that as God made him not for himself, so he should not live to himself, but for God's Glory, and the good of Men: this Communicating is enjoined *Heb.* 13. 16. 2^{dly}. It implyeth not a Spareing, but a Liberal Giving, he hath a large Heart and an open Hand, according to his Ability, and the Necessities of the Objects of Charity: It was counted Liberality in the Poor Widow, to give a Mite or two, but it were penuriousness in a Richer Person. See *2 Cor.* 9. 6. 3^{dly} It implyeth giving to many, as *Eccles.* 11. 12. Not to make one poor-Body Rich; and let many Starve, there is Discretion to be used in Charity. *Psal.* 112. 5. The other Expression qualifyeth this Dispersing of our Goods, the Good Man disperseth his Goods by *Giving* of them *to the Poor*. There are some who disperse their Estate very fast and profusely, they quickly (as the saying is) let the Wind among

among their Heaps of Treasure and Great Estates, but it is by Drunkenness, Whoredom, Gaming, spent on their Back and Belly, or on mistaken Credit and Honour; on high and Luxurious Living: Some peoples Cloaths, and House-hold Furniture Eat up what they should lay out on the Neccessitous Poor: Others disperse on their Superstition, and out of a mistaken Zeal for Religion, as *I/sai 46. 6. They lavish Gold out of the Bag*: what incredible Riches hath the Blind Superstition of Papists furnished some Churches and Monasteries with, while many Poor want Bread: here is a dispersing with a Witness; but the Good Man's dispersing is *Giving to the Poor* for their Relief: Which dispersing does not use to Ruin Estates, and bring the giver to poverty, as the other doth. The 2^d. part of the Text is the Blessings that follow on this Liberality. 1. *His Righteousness endureth for ever*, Some expound it thus: Bounty or Mercifulness (so the word is used, *Dan. 4. 27.* and often in the Old Testament) shall never want a Fond, his Riches shall be like a Springing Fountain that goeth not dry: Others, the reward of his Bounty shall never fail: Others, his Bountiful Disposition will continue: Others, the effect of his Bounty is often abiding and conspicuous to the Glory of God, and Commendation of the Liberal Man, even after he is laid in the Dust. Many times the good works of Men that are bountiful are a lasting Monument: an instance of this, Wee have in the Famous Hospital that giveth the occasion to this Meeting: how many great Estates of Citizens, and others, which they had with great care gathered, are wasted by prodigal Heirs, since this Hospital was founded, while it is yet lasting to the use, it was appointed for. 2^{dly}. Another Blessing, *his horn shall be exalted with honour*; That is, Strength, Prosperity and Honour shall be the Fruit of such a practice; In a word, the Psalmist would have us look on this, as the best way to raise, and to establish a Family, which many are Ambitious of, but they take the wrong way to compass their Design, by defrauding the Poor of what the Lord hath made their due out of Mens Estates. Several practical Truths may be here observed, which time will not allow to insist on, I shall summe up what Doctrines the Text affordeth, in this one Proposition, *Liberality*

rality, for the Relief the Poor, is a Duty, that God requireth and will Reward.

For clearing this, and convincing you of this Truth, I shall first prove this in the General, and then shall prove some particular Truths, that are comprehended under the General Doctrine

For the General proposition, It is plainly, peremptorily and frequently commanded. *Lev. 25. 35. Deut. 15. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 1/2 58. 7. Luke 11. 41. Luke. 3. 11. 1 Tim 6. 18. Heb. 13. 16.* If the Authority of God have any weight with us, this we will make Conscience of.

2ly. The Lord hath declared Himself well pleased with this, as a Christian Duty. *Heb. 13. 16.*

3ly. It hath alwayes been esteemed in the Church, and pressed by the Faithful Pastors of it. The Papists, it is true, carry it too high, make it Meritorious, and insist mostly on it, perverting the peoples Charity, which should relieve the Poor, to feed Idle Monks, and adorn and Enrich Monasteries: But the Fathers, and the Faithful Ministers in all ages thought it their duty to press this good work on the people: So doth the Apostle, *2 Cor. 8. 1. and 9. 1.* And with what Earnestness and strength of Argument, do the Fathers in their Sermons, and Epistles urge this Duty on the people? *Augustine* sayeth, *The poor Man is a Fruitful field, it quickly yeildeth Fruit to the Sower.* Again, *If thou be a good Merchant, an excellent Usurer, give that which thou canst not keep always, that thou may receive that which thou canst not lose; give a little, that thou mayest receive a hundred-fold; give a temporal possession, that thou mayest receive an Eternal Inheritance.* *Ambrose*, he is truly Blessed out of whose house the poor never goeth empty. Again, to withhold relief from the Indigent for saving his Life is to kill him. Beware that thou board not up in thy Bags the health or safety of the poor; That is to Bury him, in heaps of Silver; Another saith, be doth in vain stretch forth his hand to God in Prayer who stretcheth it not out to the Poor by giving.

4ly. Nature

4ly. Nature teacheth this Duty, The Heathens both commended and used this practice; to the Shame of many, who own the true Religion; I shall forbear instances to spare time, only I cannot pass that of *Xenophon*, who used to say, That it was more Glorious, for one to leave many Deeds of Bounty behind him, than many Trophees of Victory.

5ly. For this end, The Lord (who could have levelled all the World) hath made some Poor, and others Rich, That the one may Exercise Dependence upon God, who feedeth all, and the other might shew their obedience to him in feeding the Poor, See *Deut.* 15. 10. 11 The Lord hath made the one His Stewards, and the other His Receivers.

6ly. It is the constant and unfailing Fruit of the Grace of God, And the footsteps that God's Flock hath always walked in: Abundance of Instances may be given. See *Prov.* 21. 26. *Obadiab* is one Instance. *1 Kings* 18. 13. Also *Job.* 31. 16. And *Zacheus* *Luke* 19: 8. *Cornelius Aet.* 10. 12. 13. 4 *Dorcas Aets* 9 36. The Church of Jerusalem in the time of great Persecution, had all things common *Aet.* 2. 44. and 4 34. And we Read of Churches sending Relief to other Churches in Distress.

Under this General Truth, some particulars are to be proved, for further clearing the matter. 1st. It is certain, that this Liberal bestowing is not left at Liberty, it is not only a commendable thing, but a necessary Duty; Actual Giving, is necessary to all. as they have occasion: and a Disposition or Inclination to it: is necessary in all *Simply*. This is clear, first, from the command of God, of which before considering, especially that breaking of one Command, is a Breach of the whole Law, being a despising of Gods Authority; See *Jam.* 2. 10. 11.

Also from the Threatnings of the Wrath of God, against Neglecters of this Duty *Prov.* 21. 13. and 28. 27. A Curse not only from the Poor who are defrauded, but from Angels and God Himself shall be on him, saith *Gejerus* (a Learned Interpreter) *Matt.* 25. 42. it bringeth a Consumption on peoples Estates, *Prov.* 11. 24.

Another Truth here comprehended is, As People must give account to God of all other Actings, or omissions; so especially of this, how they have employed what God gave them in the World, you are not Accomprable to Men, how you spend what is your own (Though it is a pity that profuse Wasters are not punished as Pests among Men, and Destroyers, or Weakners of the Commonwealth) yet God will surely call you to an Account: And particularly what proportion of your Goods you have given to the Poor, or whether you have *eaten your Morfel alone*; This is no doubt a part of our Stewardship, or trust, that we have from the Lord, of which we must give an Account. *Luke 16. 12.* And that this is designed in that Parable may be gathered from verse 9. where the Application of the Parable is, *Thar Men should make Friends of the Mammon, (or Riches) of Unrighteousness* (Riches are so called, because much Unrighteousness is Acted in the World in getting, in keeping and in using them) in order to *Everlasting Habitations*; The meaning is, that people should use their Riches, or what they Enjoy, with respect to their appearance at Judgement: Which if it were minded, the Poor would get a better share then they do; That this is aimed at, is also clear from *ver. 11. 12.* Where Faithfulness in using Worldly Goods is mentioned, which could not be, if these were not a Trust, that Men have from God, the Giver of them, of which they must give account to him: This Truth is also manifest from the account we have of the last Judgement, *Math. 25.* Where peoples Charity, in relieving the Poor and distressed, is the one thing mentioned about which God will Reckon with Men: And surely it will be in a special manner taken notice of.

A Third particular included in the Doctrine is, *God will reward this Liberality to the Poor*, the Text is a plain proof of this. Also *Prov. 19. 17* where ye see, that they that lay out their Goods thus have Gods Word for a sure and abundant payment, and his Word is surer than Mens Bond. Yea then the surest Right, or even possession that ye can have, *Mat. 10. 42. Heb. 6. 10. Ecl. 11. 1.* And this Giving is called Sowing, which useth to yeild a plentiful Crop, much more
income

income, then is laid out. 2 Cor. 9. 6. Prov. 11. 24. Gal. 6. 7, 8, 9, 10. Prov. 3. 9, 10. This Reward is not of Debr, as if our Charity could merit, but of Grace; The Lords Gracious Testimony of approving so good a Work. The Blessings that are the Reward of this Good Work, are always real and sure, and to them who do it a right, and from a good Principle, they are Eternal: But often they are visible and observable by Men; sometimes the Lord Blesseth such with Riches and Increase of Goods, Whereas there is a secret Moth and invisible Consumption upon the Estates of them, who do no good Works this Way.

A Blessing to posterity is often the fruit of this Grace, P/al. 112: 2. It is spoken of the Charitable Man. Instances of this may be given; if it were fit to mention the Names of persons so publicly.

It is the way to raise or to Establish a Family, A good Name, Praise and Esteem among Men is often the Reward of this good Work, the Remembrance of such is savory and with respect; The Hospital hard by is an Instance of this, *George Heriot* is Remembred with Honour, when the Names of Hoording Misers, and profuse Wasters, on their Lusts, do Wither, are forgotten that they were on Earth, or are only spoken off to their Disgrace. And not only the founder, but such as have improved and promoted this good Work, and made this Charity to extend to 4 or 5 times as many moe as could have the benefite of it a few Years agoe, such I say God will Bless, and Man will praise.

Tho. Fisher
Treasurer.

Use. That which I shall chiefly insist on by way of Application is, To press this Duty on them that hear me. many things which may be used as Motives are already and occasionally mentioned: And I believe none of us, when we consider the Duty in it self, will deny that it ought to be our care to perform it, but most Men notwithstanding make a shift to excuse themselves and quiet their Consciences in the shameful neglect of it, I shall therefore speak but to Three Heads here. *First*, What Charitable Liberality should we use. *Secondly*, Who should use it. *Thirdly*, What usually hindereth it.

For the *First*. These Works Regard the Bodies of People, or their Souls, or the publick state of the Nation or Church. Charity to Peoples Bodies is manifold. By giving Liberally to the Weekly Collection at the Church door, it is God's Ordinance, 2 Cor. 16. 1, 2. And it is the stock out of which many Poor are Relieved. Giving to particular needy persons, The Widows, the Fatherless, the Strangers, the Sick, and Infirm, these who by any cross providences have had any such losses as bringeth them to need the Charity of others, poor Families who do what they can to live, and yet cannot subsist without the help of others. Lending to some without usury is as really a Duty, and as great a Work of Charity, as giving a little to others. *Psalm* 112. 5. Breeding of Young Ones, Boys, or Girls. If every Family that is Rich, or can live well, should take a Young one and feed them, and Gloath them, and breed them in Religion, and to such Learning as they are capable of, or is fitt for them, and put them to Trades, what a Blessing would it be to the Nation? There would not be so many Idle persons, Thieves and other Debauched persons, who are a burden to City and Country, and it might entail a Blessing on such Families.

2dly. We should mind that Charitable bestowing that contributeth to the good of peoples Souls, such as giving somewhat for the propagation of the Gospel in places of Ignorance and Barbarity; As great Men might contribute much to the Propagation of the Gospel in the Heathen and Turkish parts of the World, so Mean Men might do somewhat towards advancing Religion among our *Highlanders*: An excellent and worthy person in our Neighbour-Nation, hath lately caused print the Bible in the Highland Language, and sent a great quantity of them to be distributed among that people. O! that some among our Selves would imitate so worthy a Pattern. Wayes enough may be found how such Charity might be well employed; It's a good Work to contribute to the placing of Ministers, where they are wanting, and Encouraging them where they are placed: Alas the Covetousness and perverseness of Men in some places of the Country doth much obstruct the Gospel, Some keep
places

places, as long vacant as they can. Others defraud Ministers of what is their due, so that in some places there is a necessity of removing Ministers for want of Maintainance, as the *Levites* in *Nehemiah's* time *Neb. 13: 10, 11*. Its sad when there is none to shew Charity in such a case, in settling a Maintainance where it is not, and sadder when justice is wanting in getting of what is due, and that to the great detriment of the Souls of People. It's an Act of Charity to buy Bibles and practical Books, and give them to the poor: as some have done, and sent them from *London* unto the Remotest places of that Nation, to be distributed.

3^{dly}. Publick Charity is a good Work, That is highly commendable, such as Building and Endowing of Hospitals for the poor, the Sick, the Aged, Strangers, but especially for Breeding of Young Ones, whether Boys or Girls. Examples of this kind are rare and followed but by few: In the Hospital, that giveth occasion to our meeting to day, we have a great instance of publick Charity for Breeding of Boys. And I understand there is a design on Foot in this City for the like Charity for Breeding of Girls, which is a pious and commendable work, and which every one that is capable should contribute toward setting it foreward, as some to their great Commendation have already done: It is a work, that may not only be of advantage to the poor Young Ones, and their necessitous Parents, but may be of publick advantage (if wisely and faithfully managed) by furnishing the City and other places with persons fit for service in Families, and for all other Employments that are competent to that Sex, instead of a great many Thieves and Whores, and persons good for nothing, which grow up without being bred either to Religion, or to any thing else that is good. It is a good Work to improve what is thus begun, and to make it as useful and extensive as possible, for the ends that it is appointed for. And when such Donations are embezzled or dilapidated, whether by unfaithfulness, or Negligence, it is a Heinous Sin. It is also for the publick good to Erect Schools and Colleges to mortify Bursarys, whereby many good Spirits, which through poverty might be lost, are trained up for the publick Service; and they who

cannot

cannot do thus, might take a poor Student into their house for a time : Also helping of publick Libraries and augmenting them, that they may be stored with all the best Books for the help of them, that cannot buy of their own : It is very strange, that this age is so far short of former ages, in all these sorts of Liberality.

The second thing proposed is, Who should be thus Liberal for private Charity all are obliged to it, according to their Capacity : publick Charity is out of the reach of many, and there are more who do not what they well might do this way. it is true, it is only to be expected from them who have somewhat to spare from the Maintenance of their Families : But if people were less profuse that way, they would have more to give for a pious and good use. I shall then shew you from whom such Charity might be expected, First, from Childless persons, it is they who have been ordinarily most Eminent in the good Works, especially if they have few necessitous Friends to relieve, and even they who have these ; The publick Necessities should have a good share of their Means. Secondly, They who have much Wealth and few Children, it is a great evil in many, that they shew nothing enough to provide for their Children, many give to their Children so much, that it is a snare, maketh them mind no Industry nor Vertue, yea they destroy it and their Souls to the boot, in spending what their parents have laid up for them : Therefore it is the wisdom of Rich parents to give their Children what they may comfortably live on, using Industry and Frugality, and the rest to lay up for good uses, especially if Children be not so wise, Sober, and Religious as they should be, they are to be entrusted with the less.

Thirdly, Even they who have much Wealth and many Children, they should not be wholly wanting to this Duty, a little taken off every Childs portion and piously laid out may entail a Blessing on the Children to their greater Wordly Advantage, See Prov. 20, 7. If we would consider that it is the Blessing of the Lord that maketh us rich, and it is that Blessing that raiseth and preserveth great Families, we should be more careful to lay up a Blessing for them, then to lay up great Riches for them.

3^{ly}. The third thing is, What does usually hinder this Charitable Liberality. The Love of the World: The Heart cleaving to it, too high esteem of it, whereby having it is preferred to the Souls good and peace, and to pleasing God.

2^{ly}. Want of, or defectiveness in the Love of God. 1 *Jo* 3. 17.

3^{ly}. A narrow selfish temper, want of a publick Spirit; many act as if nothing were to be regarded but themselves, as if themselves were their last end.

4 *Fourthly*, Distrust of God's providence: people will not believe that their Bread cast on the Waters shall be recovered, or that if they Sow they shall Reap, they have no such perswasion of the Truth of the Word, as that they can venture any thing upon it.

5. *Fifthly*, Pride and Luxury: People that overvalue themselves and despise others, think nothing enough for themselves, and any thing too much for others, and people that profusely spend on their pride, Vanity, pleasures and Lusts, can spare nothing for any good use; It hath always been observed, that they who have done most good, were such as were Frugal in their Expences on themselves, they who spend least needlessly, do bestow most Charitably.

6. *Sixty*, It hath been often a lett and discouragement to Liberal Charity when it is observed, that what is given that way is perverted or used amiss, by them who were entrusted with it, this, as it is a great guilt in it self, being Theft and Sacrilege, so it is the Ruin of publick good Works, but it will be a Moth, wherever it is found, and it is the part of them, who are in Capacity, to retrieve what others have done amiss this way: And now some are endeavouring to do.

Use 2. What other Exhortation may be given on this occasion is often spoken to, wherefore I hint at but a few words. 2^{ly}. Then, let Overseers of the Hospital and of other Mortifications, take care that what is given for so good Ends, may be employed to the best advantage, according to the will of the Donor, it is a trust laid on them by God and Man, and they must Answer for it. It is not only the duty of such Trustees, to see that the Charity of others be not lost, or if lost, that it may be recovered, but also that it be not misplaced, either on

is to be used here, for it
is to be by all by any Interall, or Excess, or on such as are wick-
edly inclined and debauched: (where such evils appear in them they
should be turned out) nor on them who are unable to learn, or ne-
glect to learn, what they are bred to. Benefices should be taken
from such and conferred upon them who are like to improve them
better.

U/s: Another Exhortation is to the *Governours* and *Teachers* of
the Youth, who are partakers of this Charity for their Education; It
breathes on you to teach them carefully what they ought to Learn, espe-
cially the grounds of Religion, that they may not only Repeat the Ca-
techism, but understand it: you should put them in mind to pray and
to Read the Scriptures daily, and curb every budding of Vice that may
appear in them, as Swearing, Lying and such like: your Faithfulness
and Zeal in this may have much influence to attain the ends for
which this Charity is given, or to destroy the design of it.

U/s: The last Address shall be to the *Young Ones* on whom this
Charity is bestowed, and for whose good it is bestowed, Acknowledge
Gods goodness in providing so far for you: Labour to fear God,
without which it had been better for you, ye had never been Born, or
that ye had Starv'd in stead of being cared for: And if ye can apply
your Minds to think on what is to come, Think what will become
of Your Souls hereafter: And consider how ye shall live in the
World, if ye neglect and mis-spends your time, wherein ye should
be fitted for Service to God, and providing for your selves, ye are like to
Live Miserably and in Contempt all your Days. And if ye give your
Hearts to Wickedness now, Satan may grow to hold on your Hearts
is never to leave tempting you, till he bring you to a woeful End;
Pray that the Lord may win your Hearts to him betimes.

F I N I S

Printed for J. Sturges at the
Sign of the Crown in St. Dunstons Church
Lane London

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